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PAGE 01 STATE 159167

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SUBJ: KENNEDY SUBCOMMITTEE STAFF REPORT ON REFUGEE AND CIVILIAN
WAR CASUALTY PROBLEMS IN INDOCHINA

TEXT SENATOR KENNEDY'S PREFACE FOLLOWS (UNESSENTIAL WORDS OMIT-
TED):

QUOTE THIS REPORT CONTINUES SUBCOMMITTEE'S EFFORT TO DOCUMENT
DEVASTATING IMPOACT INDOCHINA WAR ON CIVILIAN POPULATION,
AND MAKE CASE AGAIN THAT PROBLEMS OF WAR REFUGEES AND
CIVILIAN CASUALTIES MUST BE MATTER OF VITAL CONCERN TO AMERICAN
PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERNMENT.

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AS SO OFTEN IN PAST, THIS CURRENT EFFORT BEING CARRIED OUT
UNDER SPECTRE OF MOUNTING VIOLENCE, WIDENING WARFARE, AND EX-
PANDING U.S. INVOLVEMENT, WHICH NOT ONLY CONTINUES TO TEAR

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Department of State

STATES OF

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 159167

AT OUR NATIONAL LIFE AND SPIRIT BUT ALSO HEIGHTENS AGONY OF RAPIDLY GROWING NUMBER CIVILIANS IN AFFECTED AREAS.

WITH SPREADING WAR INTO CAMBODIA, FEAR HAS NOW GRIPPED ALMOST ENTIRE POPULATION OF INDochina, VASTLY INCREASING HUMAN MISERY, FLOW OF REFUGEES, AND OCCURANCE CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES.

WE CONFRONTED TODAY WITH VERY SERIOUS REGIONAL CRISIS OF MILLIONS PEOPLE DISPLACED WITHIN THEIR COUNTRY OR FLEEING ACROSS INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES. ALL IN URGENT NEED CARE AND PROTECTION. MORE THAN OUR GOVERNMENT CARES ADMIT, AMERICAN MILITARY ACTIVITIES -- ESPECIALLY HEAVY SOMETIME MANY AREAS -- IS CONTRIBUTING MUCH TO THIS HUMAN TOLL OF WAR.

IN CAMBODIA ALONE OVER LAST 4 TO 5 MONTHS POPULATION PHNOM PENH DOUBLED -- FROM SOME 700,000 TO WELL OVER 1,000,000 PERSONS. PROVINCIAL CAPITALS AND DISTRICT TOWNS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY BULGING WITH NEW ARRIVALS FROM COUNTRYSIDE. THOUSANDS NOW LIVE IN SQUALOR AND FILTH IN OVER-CROWDED REFUGEE CENTERS. HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES OVER-BURDENED WITH HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES. SITUATION GROWING SO CRITICAL THAT INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCIES IN GENEVA NOW PREPARING FOR POSSIBILITY OF FAMINE NEXT YEAR SINCE MANY CAMBODIAN PEASANTS NO PLANTING THIS YEAR'S RICE CROP DUE INSECURITY OF COUNTRYSIDE.

IN LAOS -- WHERE WE HAVE BEEN WITNESSING FAMILIAR PATTERN OF VIETNAM IN DESTRUCTION COUNTRYSIDE, GENERATION REFUGEES, AND OCCURANCE CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES -- SITUATION AMONG CIVILIANS CONTINUES DETERIORATE. THROUGH SUCH THINGS AS SATURATION BOMBING AND FORCED EVACUATION POPULATION FROM ENEMY HELD OR THREATENED AREAS -- WE HAVE HELPED CREATE UNTOLD AGONY FOR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS VILLAGERS, WHOM WE NOW FINDING DIFFICULT HANDLE IN TERMS SIMPLE HUMANITARIAN NEEDS, LET ALONE THOSE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES WHICH DIRECT OUR OFFICIAL POLICY.

WE HAVE NOT LEARNED THAT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR A REFUGEE IN LAOS IS LESS A POLITICAL ASPIRATION THAN SIMPLE GEOGRAPHIC URGE TO RETURN HIS NATIVE HAMLET AND LIVE IN PEACE. WE HAVE NOT LEARNED THAT CONTINUING AND ESCALATING PRESSURES OF WAR NOT ONLY PREVENTS THIS, BUT IS DESTROYING ITS VERY POSSIBILITY.

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UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 159167

IN THIS RESPECT, ONE OF GREATEST TRAGEDIES OF INDOCHINA WAR HAS SURFACED IN SAD PLIGHT HILL TRIBES IN LAOS, ESPECIALLY MEO AND LAO TEUNG. MOST U.S. SPONSORED PARAMILITARY FORCES IN LAOS HAVE BEEN DRAWN FROM THESE TRIBES, AND WE NOW KNOW THESE FORCES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS HAVE PAID EXTREMELY HEAVY PRICE IN LIFE AND LIMB RECENT YEARS. ESTIMATES IN FIELD SUGGEST THAT UP TO FIFTY PERCENT THESE PEOPLE -- PERHAPS MANY AS 200,000 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN -- HAVE ALREADY LOST LIVES IN COMBAT OR FROM HARDSHIPS BROUGHT ON BY SERVICE OUR CAUSE. FOLLOWING EXCERPTS FROM RECENT INTERNAL MEMORANDUM OF U.S. MISSION VIENTIANE SPEAKS FOR ITSELF -- AND FULLY CONFIRMS EXPERT TESTIMONY BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE MAY 7 THIS YEAR. MEMO SAYS IN PART: INNER QUOTE...WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT INASMUCH AS GREAT MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS MILITARY FORCE LIES IN ITS FIGHTING HEART AND ITS NUMBERS, AS WELL AS LEADERSHIP AND EQUIPMENT, MEOS AND LAO TEUNG NO LONGER MILITARY ASSET THEY WERE IN PAST -- PARTICULARLY WHEN WEIGHED AGAINST COST THEIR SUPPORT IN DOLLARS AND IN ALL PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS THAT DEVELOP FROM MANNER IN WHICH THEY EMPLOYED.

IN OTHER WORDS, THEY HAVE BEEN USED TO HILT AND AS MANY OF THEM ARE EXPRESSING -- THEY HAVE HAD IT!

THIS SITUATION REQUIRES REASSESSMENT OUR POLICIES REGARDING MEO AND OTHER HILL TRIBES TO EXTENT THAT HUMANITARIAN/ECONOMIC FACTORS MAY PREDOMINATE OVER MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS IN CHARTING OUR FUTURE COURSES OF ACTION REGARDING THESE PEOPLES. WE COULD IN EFFECT GIVE THEM FOND THANKS FOR SERVICES AND CAST THEM ADRIFT TO SHIFT FOR THEMSELVES, FACED WITH SPECTER OF STARVATION AND/OR BEING ABSORBED (WITH INCREASINGLY BITTER MEMORIES OF OUR ABANDONMENT) INTO COMMUNIST DOMINATED AREAS. THIS OF COURSE WOULD NOT BE HUMANITARIAN OR STRATEGICALLY SOUND CONSIDERING U.S. OBJECTIVES IN LAOS...

OUR IMMEDIATE PROBLEM...IS WHAT DO WITH MASS REFUGEES WHO MOVING SOUTH AND WEST INTO ALREADY CROWDED HILL AREAS OF XIENG KHOUANG AND VIENTIANE PROVINCES. THE 1,500 BLACK THAIS AS WELL AS 39,000 ETHNIC LAO OF XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE HAVE ALREADY MOVED INTO VIENTIANE PLAIN WHERE THEY EITHER BEING ABSORBED INTO POPULATION OR WILL SHOW UP AS SOCIAL WELFARE PROBLEM... THE HILL PEOPLE... ARE STANDING ON CLIFF SO TO SPEAK, ABANDONED



Department of State

TELETYPE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 159167

AT PRESENT BY LAO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND LOOKING TO US TO HELP THEM...

FOR FRIENDLY MEO LOCATED DEEP IN NORTHERN AREAS AND CUT OFF BY COMMIE FORCES, IT PRUDENT THAT WE NOT AGGREGATE THEIR SITUATION BY OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OR USE OF THEM IN MANNER TO MAKE THEM TARGETS FOR ENEMY COUNTER-MEASURES. THEY ARE LOST TO US. LET'S LEAVE THEM ALONE AND NOT TRIGGER FURTHER ACTIONS THAT WILL WORSEN THEIR LOT AND/OR HAVE THEM ADDED OUR REFUGEE BURDEN. END INNER QUOTE.

AS IF DETERIORATING SITUATION AMONG PEOPLE LAOS AND NEW PROBLEM IN CAMBODIA WERE NOT ENOUGH CAUSE URGENT CONCERN, THE LONG STANDING PROBLEM REFUGEES AND CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES CONTINUES FASTER IN SOUTH VIETNAM. DESPITE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS THAT WAR-RELATED CIVILIAN PROBLEMS ARE BEING SOLVED, THERE MUCH TO SUGGEST THAT BASIC SITUATION HAS CHANGED VERY LITTLE IN RECENT YEARS. SUBCOMMITTEE DISTRESSED BY CONTINUED LACK OF URGENCY OR ACTIVE CONCERN BY WASHINGTON AND SAIGON FOR SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND DAILY LIVES SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL ATTITUDE CONTINUES PERVADE MUCH OF OUR VIEW OF WHAT NEEDS BE DONE, AND A FALSE SENSE OPTIMISM PERVADES MUCH OF OUR VIEW ON WHAT HAS BEEN DONE.

IT A REGREYTABLE FACT THAT PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE AS OVERWHELMING TODAY AS IN PAST AND IN SOME WAYS EVEN MORE SO.

WE FIND THAT HUNDREDS NEW REFUGEES STILL BEING GENERATED EVERY DAY. WE FIND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF OLD REFUGEES WHO PRESUMABLE HAD RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGES HAVE NOW AGAIN BECOME REFUGEES -- GOING BACK TO CAMPS AND SQUATTER AREAS FROM WHICH HAVE MOVED, BACK AND FORTH, OFF AND ON, SINCE WAR FIRST ESCALATED IN 1965.

WE FIND THAT THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS -- PERHAPS MILLIONS -- OF DISPLACED PERSONS DRAWN TO URBAN CENTERS BY THE WAR AND INSECURITY IN COUNTRYSIDE, STILL NOT RECOGNIZED AS REFUGEES. THEIR LONG IGNORED NEED FOR COMPASSION AND CARE HAS INEVITABLY DEGENERATED INTO MASSIVE SOCIAL WELFARE PROBLEM AND ACTIVE BREEDING GROUND FOR UNREST, INSTABILITY, AND NEW INSURGENCIES. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS INVOLVING VETERANS, WAR WIDOWS, AND REFUGEES IN SAIGON, AND THE THIEU GOVERNMENT'S DISREGARD OF THEIR PLIGHT, DRAMATIC-



Department of State

TELEGRAM

Approved For Release 2002/05/08 : CIA-RDP72-00337R000200110009-6

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 159167

ALLY UNDERSCORE GROWING PROBLEMS.

DESPITE CLAIMS THAT WAR IS "WINDING DOWN" WE FIND BY OFFICIAL RECORDS AT LEAST 5,000 CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES STILL BEING ADMITTED TO GVN AND U.S. MILITARY HOSPITALS EACH MONTH -- ADMISSION RATE WHICH HAS VARIED LITTLE IN RECENT YEARS AND FAILS REFLECT LARGER NUMBER CASUALTIES KILLED OUTRIGHT, OR TREATED ELSEWHERE OR NOT AT ALL.

WE FIND THAT FORTY-FOUR PERCENT OF RECENT HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS -- SOME 12,000 DURING FIRST 6 MONTHS THIS YEAR -- REGISTERED IN MEKONG DELTA, WHERE LOWEST LEVEL OF FIGHTING REPORTED AND WHERE SUCCESS IN PACIFICATION MOST HIGHLY PUBLICIZED.

IN OTHER AREAS SOUTH VIETNAM, ESPECIALLY IN NORTHERN AND COASTAL PROVINCES, WE FIND CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES BEING ADMITTED TO HOSPITALS AT INCREASINGLY HIGH RATES. IN PHU-YEN PROVINCE, FOR EXAMPLE, 685 CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES ADMITTED DURING FIRST SEVEN MONTHS THIS YEAR, AS COMPARED WITH TUTDURING ALL 1969. MOREOVER, THROUGHOUT COUNTRY MAJOR MEDICAL SHORTAGES REPORTED, ESPECIALLY IN CRITICAL SUPPLIES SUCH AS BLOOD PLASMA, MAKING ADDQUATE TREATMENT WAR VICTIMS IMPOSSIBILITY IN MANY AREAS.

THE RECORD, I FEEL, IS CLEAR ON WHERE WE STAND IN INDOCHINA. THERE MOUNTING VIOLENCE AND WIDENING WAR. THERE RAPIDLY RISING HUMAN COSTS. AND THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT NOW THAT INTERVENTION AMERICAN FORCES IN CAMBODIA, AND OUR EXPENDING INVOLVEMENT THAT COUNTRY, CONTRIBUTING SUBSTANTIALLY TO NEW PHASE STRUGGLE IN INDOCHINA AND TO TRAGIC PLIGHT CIVILIANS THROUGHOUT ENTIRE REGION.

OUR NATIONAL INTEREST DOES NOT LIE IN CONTINUATION THE WAR, OR AN EXPANDING U.S. INVOLVEMENT. DOES NOT LIE IN FURTHER DESTRUCTION COUNTRYSIDE IN CAMBODIA, LAOS, OR VIETNAM. DOES NOT LIE IN GENERATION MORE WAR REFUGEES AND CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. DOES NOT LIE IN SERIOUS CRISIS OF PEOPLE SPREADING FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER LIKE FALLING DOMINOES.

RATHER IT LIES IN URGENTLY NEEDED EFFORT BY OUR GOVERNMENT TO FOCUS MORE ATTENTION ON TOUGH NEGOTIATIONS NECESSARY TO STOP BIOLENCE AND EXTRICATE OURSELVES FROM THE WAR. LIES AS WELL.

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Approved For Release 2002/05/08 : CIA-RDP72-00337R000200110009-6



Department of State

TELETYPE

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PAGE 06 STATE 159167

IN FAR GREATER EFFORT TO MEET VAST HUMAN NEEDS GENERATED BY CONFLICT.

THERE SERIOUS QUESTION IN MINDS OF MANY -- ESPECIALLY AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE LONG QUESTIONED VIABILITY OUR NATIONAL POLICY IN VIETNAM AND INDOCHINA -- WHETHER THERE TIME OR ENERGY TO CARE FOR CIVILIAN VICTIMS THE WAR. A SIMILAR THOUGHT, PERHAPS -- ALTHOUGH FOR DIFFERENT REASONS -- MAY ALSO BE RUNNING THROUGH MINDS OF SOME WHO STOUTLY DEFEND THAT POLICY.

HOW ELSE CAN WE EXPLAIN OUR GOVERNMENT'S DOWNGRADING REFUGEE AND CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTY PROBLEMS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, HEAVY CUTTING OF BUDGET FOR SUCH ITEMS AS VIETNAMESE PUBLIC HEALTH, AND DELIBERATE EVASION ANY ACTIVE CONCERN FOR MASSIVE SOCIAL WELFARE PROBLEMS IN SAIGON AND OTHER URBAN CENTERS?

HOW ELSE CAN WE INTERPRET LOW PRIORITY OUR GOVERNMENT ATTACHES TO FEEDING MALNOURISHED REFUGEES IN LAOS?

HOW ELSE CAN WE UNDERSTAND FACT THAT CAMBODIAN REFUGEES -- WHO WERE EVACUATED FROM "SANCTUARIES" TO SOUTH VIETNAM BY U.S. TROOPS -- WERE LATER RETURNED, ONLY TO FACE DESTROYED BILLAGES, RUINED FIELDS, AND NO ASSISTANCE TO HELP REBUILD THEIR LIVES?

U.S. IS GREAT AND POWERFUL, AND AS RECENT HISTORY OF INDOCHINA ILLUSTRATES SO WELL, WE FREELY USE OUR INFLUENCE AND POWER MANY WAYS AND FOR MANY ENDS, BUT POWER TO HEAL, TO SALVAGE, AND REHABILITATE THE HAPLESS VICTIMS OF CONFLICT -- AND RESPONSIBILITY TO MINIMIZE OUR CONTRIBUTION TO INEVITABLE HUMAN TOLL OF WAR -- NEVER BEEN EXERCISED IN MEASURE COMMENSURATE WITH THE OTHER USES OUR POWER IN SOUTH VIETNAM, LAOS, OR CAMBODIA.

ARE WE AS NATION SO MORALLY BANKRUPT THAT ISSUE OF WAR VICTIMS IN INDOCHINA CAN BE COMPUTERIZED OUT OF EXISTENCE AND SWEEPED INTO PAGES HISTORY WITHOUT GREATER EFFORT MEET HUMAN NEEDS?

TO EXTENT THAT SERIOUS EFFORT MADE TO MEET OUR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSIBILITIES TO PEOPLE OF VIETNAM AND ALL INDOCHINA, WE MAY HELP ASSURE THAT WAR VICTIMS -- SIGNIFICANT CROSS SECTION OF THE PEOPLE -- WILL STAND FOR AT LEAST SOME OF WHAT WE OFFERED MORE THAN 50,000 LIVES TO GAIN.



Approved For Release 2002/05/08 : CIA-RDP72-00337R000200110009-6

Department of State

TELEGRAM

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 159167

THERE MUCH TO BE DONE FOR WAR VICTIMS IN INDOCHINA. AND MUCH
MORE OUR COUNTRY MUST DO TO HELP. UNQUOTE. IRWIN

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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